

Boston-Ponta Delgada 1815

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1. Introduction

I would like to suggest in this paper that from very early on in United States history the islands of the Azores served as mid-Atlantic meeting point for Portuguese and American culture. A good example of that is the description the historian William Hickling Prescott (1796-1859) left us of his stay on the island of São Miguel as a young man (he was nineteen years old at the time), in connection with a visit to his grandfather, Thomas Hickling, the American diplomatic representative there. Although Prescott's stay on the island lasted for six months, that is, between October 1815 and April 1816, due to a serious eye condition, which he was to suffer from most of his life, the young traveller was confined to a darkroom for much of the time he spent there. Had that not been the case, we would certainly have today a more complete account of his stay, thus supplementing the scanty number of foreign sources we have for the Azores and for the period in question. Still, what Prescott wrote about São Miguel and its inhabitants, though filtered through the eyes of a foreigner, allows us to draw an interesting picture of life on this Azorean island in the earlier part of the nineteenth century.

For this paper, I have drawn primarily on two sources of information: the extant correspondence of Prescott which George Ticknor (1791-1871), fellow scholar and friend, included in his *Life of William Hickling Prescott* (1864), as well as the personal diary kept by Prescott during his European Grand Tour and which exists in manuscript form at the Massachusetts Historical Society.¹

2. Contacts between the Azores and the United States

Contacts between the United States and the Western Islands, as the Azores were known, date back to the founding of the American Republic. During the Revolutionary War, for example, the Continental Congress maintained contact

¹ William Hickling Prescott's travel diary is part of the Prescott Family Papers, deposited at the Massachusetts Historical Society. It has 185 pages and covers the period from 26 September 1815 to 14 May 1817.

with the Azores in order to coordinate the travel of its emissaries to Europe in its effort to get support for the independence movement. There have been American diplomatic representatives in the Azores since 1795, when George Washington appointed John Street as United States Consul for the Islands, based in Horta, Faial.² 1795 was also the year Thomas Hickling, Prescott's grandfather, was appointed Vice-Consul, but based in Ponta Delgada, São Miguel. Thomas Hickling had arrived on the island of São Miguel in 1769, approximately a quarter of a century before, where he was involved in the import/export trade. He became the single largest exporter of oranges from São Miguel when these first started to be despatched to Northern European ports. According to the records of the Ponta Delgada Customs House, between 1800 and 1809 Thomas Hickling exported some 100,000 crates of the fruit.³ There is no evidence to suggest that he settled in São Miguel as a result of a disagreement with his father over his support for the Revolution.⁴

3. Prescott's Visit to the Azores

As a historian, William Hickling Prescott is best known for his work on imperial Spain and Latin America. Although he never taught, he holds a unique position in the historiography of Spain and Latin America, because he was the first US historian to dedicate himself to the study of these matters. He was especially active in the 1830s and 1840s, when he published his historical works on the

² David Humphreys was the first American diplomatic representative to Portugal; he held the post of Minister in Lisbon from 1791-1797. The first U.S. Consul in Lisbon was Edward Church, appointed in 1792. This means that the American Consulate in the Azores (first in Horta, Faial, and then in Ponta Delgada, São Miguel) is the oldest continuously operating U.S. Consulate in the world.

³ The documents show that Thomas Hickling, through two companies, exported a total of 106,484 boxes of oranges. Cf. "Carta de Thomas Hickling Jr.," Tradução e notas de Henrique de Aguiar Oliveira Rodrigues, *Insulana*, vol. 51, nº2 (1995), p. 210, nota nº 14. Timothy Pitkin in his *A Statistical View of the Commerce of the United States of America* (1835), pp. 227-230, provides the value of the import/export trade between the United States, mainland Portugal and the island of Madeira down to 1833, but he does not include the Azores. The reason is undoubtedly related to the fact that it was not significant in volume. Pitkin's figures also reveal the impact of Napoleon's Continental Blockade on the trade between the two countries.

⁴ Thomas Hickling (1745-1834), William Hickling Prescott's grandfather, was born in Boston but died in Ponta Delgada. He arrived in São Miguel island on board the sailing ship "St. John" in 1769, where he settled for good. He never returned to his native country, but when the U.S. became independent, he adopted American nationality. His son, Thomas Hickling Jr. (1781-1875), continued the family business, namely the export of oranges, which was heavily affected by the War of 1812.

reigns of Ferdinand and Isabella, the Catholic, and Philip II, as well as his grand narrative stories of the conquests of Mexico and Peru.⁵ He wrote with a Romantic view of history, characterised by a strong authorial presence, a tendentious preference for political and constitutional matters, as well as a keen interest in the personality of the individuals who shape historical events. Like other historians of the period, his works do show a certain degree of cultural bias. He analysed the pre-Conquest Inca and Aztec cultures, for instance, according to a “Christian understanding of the ancient Mediterranean past,” (Boyd 960) his writings being informed by a Protestant notion that Catholicism represented an inferior and essentially superstitious form of Christianity. This, as I hope to show, is already evident in some of the letters he wrote to his family and friends from São Miguel island.

Prescott sailed from Boston on 26 September 1815 (20 Sept, according to Ticknor), on board the USA Brigantine “Legal Tender,” commanded by Captain Lindsay. Ticknor writes that it was a small vessel similar to the ones that were used to carry trade with the Western Islands. After a “rough passage,” with some strong gales and head winds, Prescott landed at Ponta Delgada (written as Ponta del Gada in his diary) on 16 October (18 October, according to Ticknor), after a twenty-two day voyage.

Conditions on board the vessel were far from satisfactory for the young Prescott as the following excerpt from his 18 October letter to his parents attests:

I have been treated with every attention by the captain and crew, and my situation rendered as comfortable as possible. But this cabin was never designed for rheumatics. The companion-way opens immediately upon deck, and the patent binnacle illuminator, *vice* windows, are so ingeniously and impartially constructed, that for every ray of light we have half a dozen drops of water. The consequence is, that the orbit of my operations for days together has been much restricted. I have banished *ennui*, however, by battling with Democrats and bed-bugs, both of which thrive on board this vessel, and in both of which contests I have been ably seconded by the cook, who has officiated as my *valet de chambre*, and in whom I find great congeniality of sentiment (Ticknor 31).

⁵ *The History of the Conquest of Mexico* (1843) is regarded as his best work. Written in three volumes, it describes how Hernando Cortés subdued the Aztec Indians. It also highlights the inferiority of Aztec religion in comparison with Christianity. *The History of the Conquest of Peru* (1847), whose central character is Pizarro, evidences similar themes. Because of his poor eyesight, Prescott used to write with the help of a secretary and a noctograph, a wooden tablet with wires used to make notes without looking at the page.

Two reasons account for Prescott's visit to São Miguel, following his graduation from Harvard University with a law degree. He had been suffering from an eye infection ("rheumatism") for some time, which had been caused by a bread crumb thrown by a fellow student. The voyage to the Azores was an attempt to mitigate this condition (by avoiding the harshness of the Boston winters) as well as an opportunity to see his grandfather, whom we suspect he had never met.⁶ A second reason has to do with the fact that he had just completed his university studies. As such, in line with common practice in the Anglo world, and as a member of New England's upper classes, Prescott was to visit continental Europe (the Grand Tour), in particular the ancient sites of Greece and Italy. After his stay in São Miguel, Prescott went on to visit London and Paris (where he did seek medical advice for his eye condition), as well as Italy, but he left Greece out of his travel plans altogether.

4. Representations of the Azores in Prescott's Travel Writings

Prescott's first impressions upon his arrival in São Miguel island could not have been better. In note form, he jotted down in his diary: "fine marine views, houses white lime and lava, streets narrow" (Prescott 1). At his grandfather's home in Rosto de Cão (a suburb of Ponta Delgada), he added the following: "Rosto de Cão, charming gardens at my Grand fathers [sic], exotics of every description, faya trees, oranges, lemons and citreous trees, pomegranates, utopia (?), flowers, plants, etc, etc," (Prescott 1).

Ticknor is quite accurate about the details surrounding the place where Prescott's grandfather lived at the time when he observes that Thomas Hickling lived at a place called Rosto de Cão, "due to the supposed resemblance of its rocks to the head of a dog" (Ticknor 32). We are told by him that Hickling lived in a country house surrounded by gardens with tropical vegetation, where laurels and myrtles dominated. He alludes to the large number of orange groves which Prescott's grandfather owned and from which he drew his income: these orange groves were "cultivated and extended chiefly through his grandfather's [Prescott's grandfather, that is] spirit and energy, until their fruit had become the staple of the island [...]" (Ticknor 32). Ticknor seems to imply that the export of oranges, which was to be the basis of the local economy for decades to come, was indeed started by Prescott's grandfather. (This is only partially true as there were other orange growers and exporters on the island.) He concludes the passage by drawing an analogy between the island of São Miguel and the Garden of the

⁶ Ticknor says that Prescott was going to visit his grandfather Thomas Hickling, "Consul of the United States at St. Michael's," which was not exactly true. In fact, Hickling was Vice-Consul.

Hesperides, Hera's mythical orchard of golden apples in Western lands (to be more precise the reference is to Hesperian fables).⁷ Visits to orange groves seem to have been a popular pastime for the young Prescott, as his diary entries attest: 19 October 1815, visit to "Donna Anna Rosa's garden, the finest in the island, delicious orange groves [...] and myrtles, twenty feet in height"; 7 February 1816: "atmosphere remarkably pure and perfumed orange groves" (Prescott 3); 15 February 1816: still another excursion to yet another orange grove: "good orange trees average 4 or 5000 oranges annually, 20,000 have been known, prices of oranges formerly 10 cents per 1000, now 6 or even 9 dollars, but property in the island yields 8 or 9 per cent" (Prescott 4).

In a letter written to his parents from the above-mentioned location, dated 13 November 1815, Prescott describes the town of Ponta Delgada as a unique, enchanted place, more fitting in some fictional account than in reality itself. Prescott writes that the city is located at the base of hills covered with yellow fields of corn. These fields of corn contrasted with the whiteness of the buildings and the picturesque turrets of the numerous convents, the whole setting creating in him, as he puts it, "*a coup d'oeil* on which the genius of a Radcliffe, or indeed any one, much less an admirer of the beauties of nature than myself, might expend a folio of sentimentality and nonsense" (Ticknor 33). In this passage, Prescott confesses himself an admirer of nature, but not of the excesses of feeling associated with some Romantic poetry.

Further down in the same letter, Prescott stresses the novelty of the scenery and of the vegetation, so unlike that which could be found in Northerner climates. In particular, he is surprised to see plants that he had only seen inside greenhouses growing in the open sky, without artificial heat. The luxuriant vegetation he could see all around him, boxwood, cypress, and myrtle, prompts him to remark that he felt as if he had been transported to the age of Horace and Anacreon (one of many classical allusions we can find in his correspondence).

As to the climate, we have to say that Prescott was able to capture the unpredictable nature of the Azorean weather quite well when he writes that the winters there were mild and the summers rather chilly. He adds, though, that the weather was "capricious," making the local inhabitants "absolutely amphibious," no doubt a reference to the large amounts of precipitation to which the island was, and still is, prone: "if they [the local inhabitants] are in sunshine one half of the day, they are sure to be in water the other half" (Ticknor 35).

⁷ According to the myth, the Garden of the Hesperides was located either in Italy or the Iberian Peninsula. This is a reference to Hera's orchard of golden apples, tended by nymphs called Hesperides. The Garden of the Hesperides is often employed as an allusion to a blessed island in the West.

He was also able to experience what it felt like to be subjected to regular volcanic activity. On 1 February 1816, an earthquake of considerable magnitude struck the town of Ponta Delgada and its environs, damaging some forty houses and many public buildings. According to Prescott's account, the walls of his grandfather's house were cracked from top to bottom as a result of the tremor. The earthquake, which lasted three and a half minutes, pulled the whole family out of bed unexpectedly, reminding the young Prescott of the disasters of Lisbon and Herculaneum.

The letter to his sister, Catherine Elizabeth Prescott (1799-?), dated 12 March 1816, contains a number of details on housing in São Miguel. In it, Prescott writes that the houses on the island were built of stone, and that they were mostly two-storied, with the lower floor of these being used by the locals as a place for keeping the cattle. These houses were painted in white lime. Elsewhere, more specifically in Prescott's letter to his parents, dated 15 March 1816, he complains about the fact that the windows of his grandfather's house at Rosto de Cão were poorly built. In his view, they were constructed the way the doors of barns in New England were built: the windows had no blinds, they were not well insulated from the winds, and let in too much light (Ticknor 38).⁸ Although the quality of the construction of his grandfather's house in the city was slightly better, the family still had to nail baize to the windows to make the room darker and thus prevent the deterioration of his eye inflammation. In the entry in his diary dated 17 October 1815, shortly after his arrival, Prescott had noted *apropos* his visit to the Fajen [*sic*]: "high stone walls obstruct the prospects, cottages without windows, fireplaces, or comforts" (Prescott 1).

The simplicity of the island's domestic architecture contrasted, however, with the richness of construction seen in churches. It struck Prescott that the Azoreans had lavish churches, "profusely ornamented with gilding and carving," even though the quality of the craftsmanship was poor (Ticknor 34). Implicit here seems to be, in my view, criticism of the artistic excesses of Catholics to the detriment of the spiritual side of their religious faith.

The general attitude of suspicion (and sometimes, overt antipathy) many Anglophone authors of this period (and before) often displayed in their writings for followers of the Catholic faith is also present in Prescott. For instance, when describing the contrast between the yellow corn fields on the hills that surround the city of Ponta Delgada and the whiteness of the turrets of the many convents he could observe in it, Prescott does not fail to remark that those convents both "beautify and disgrace the city" (Ticknor 33). As we know, there is a long

⁸ Letter dated 15 March 1816.

tradition in the Anglo-Saxon world about the negative image of Catholic convents, going back to the Protestant Revolution of the 1600s, which tended to equate nunneries with places of ill-repute.

Prescott reveals a bit more of this very same attitude in the letter he wrote to his friend and later editor W. H. Gardiner (March 1816, no day). There Prescott refers to the fact that he has visited nunneries frequently and that they do not correspond in any way to the Romantic notion people have of them as places of “purity and simplicity.” He displays the common idea among Protestants that nunneries were places of debauchery and depravity, as we can infer from this passage:

Almost every nun has a lover; that is, an innamorato who visits her every day and swears as many oaths of constancy, and imprints as many kisses on the grates as ever as Pyramus and Thisbe did on the unlucky chink which separated them. I was invited the other day to select one of these fair penitents, but, as I have no great relish for such a — correspondence, I declined the politeness, and content myself with a few ogles and sighs *en passant* (Ticknor 36-7).

Prescott, therefore, refused to engage in what was apparently a favourite pastime on the island, even though on one occasion, as he noted in his diary entry for 8 February 1816, he drank tea and ate sweets with the nuns from Convento da Esperança (Prescott 3).

In the above-mentioned letter to his sister Catherine, we have a number of lines written in the same vein. When describing the lavishness of Azorean churches, with their eight, and sometimes ten, tower bells, Prescott adds the following comment jokingly: “[...] when a great character walks off the carpet, they keep them [the tower bells] in continued jingle, as they have great faith in ringing the soul through Purgatory” (Ticknor 34). As an American brought up under the strictures of New England Protestantism, it is clear that Prescott finds all this too much. So much so that he ends this paragraph of his letter by saying that when a poor man happens to lose his child, the local population congratulate him on the joy of the occasion, but if that same man loses a pig, his friends console him. For Prescott, this is undoubtedly an example of the kind of irrational behaviour often associated with Catholic practices.

For Prescott, politics and religion were no doubt intertwined. He was especially hard on countries such as Portugal, which he believed were still under the influence of papal power, as we may gather from the letter he wrote to his friend W. H. Gardiner. In his view, the inhabitants of Catholic countries were very much “oppressed by arbitrary power and papal superstition” (Ticknor 36). As an inhabitant of a “free country, flourishing under the influences of a benign religion,” as Prescott writes, what he was given to observe of Azorean society

clearly shocked him. His comments show that he was convinced Portugal and the Azores still had a long way to go before they could reach the stage of development held by Protestant countries. And on this subject, his words were not kind, in particular when he writes that the Portuguese were “in that stage of the metamorphosis when, having lost the tails of monkeys, they have not acquired the brains of men” (Ticknor 37).

As far as technological development is concerned, Prescott’s comments to his friend Gardiner are in no way different. For him, the Portuguese lag behind the English at least two centuries in terms of “mechanical improvements” and “in the common arts and conveniences of life [...],” he remarks (Ticknor 37). And as far as literary pursuits go, the situation was even worse, in his opinion: “if, as some writers have pretended, ‘ignorance is bliss,’ they [the Portuguese] may safely claim to be the happiest people in the world” (Ticknor 37). What is interesting in this respect is that the standard Prescott uses for measuring cultural development is the English nation, not his native country.

One of the most interesting passages of Prescott’s letter to his sister is the one in which he describes his journey to the Valley of the “Furnace” (the Furnas Valley).⁹ He was clearly impressed by the volcanic activity he witnessed there, no match for what he had seen in the hot springs of Ribeira Grande, which he had visited earlier (12 February). We are told that they set out from Rosto de Cão, through mountainous terrain, a party of twenty people, on jacks. According to Prescott, the irregularity of the country created a very Romantic appearance, with some members of the party already down on the valley, others high up on the hills surrounding it, and still others very close to “precipices two hundred feet perpendicular” (Ticknor 34). Prescott tells us that the church bells were tolling as they descended the valley, announcing the end of the day like some “Angelus.” Concomitantly, the whistle of the herdsmen could also be heard, filling his bosom, as he describes it, “with sentiments of placid contentment” (Ticknor 34). We know that the sight of the Caldeiras, or hot springs, frightened the young man, especially the largest one, from which jets of hot water gushed twenty feet high with a thundering noise. In his diary entry for 10 March 1816, Prescott noted: “Excursion to the Fournas [*sic*], wonderful boiling fountains, twenty feet in diameter, depth not ascertained, lake at the Fournas, wild

⁹ The Portuguese word “Furnas” raises a number of questions, since its meaning in English is cave, whereas the English word “Furnace,” used by Prescott throughout and also by other foreign writers, describes more accurately, in my opinion, the characteristics of the site. We may be here in the presence of lexical contamination from English into Portuguese. Cf. Letter written by the English gardener George Brown to his employer, Ernesto do Canto, where he also uses the word “Furnace.” See, Nestor de Sousa, “Os ‘Canto’ nos Jardins Paisagísticos da Ilha de S. Miguel,” p. 204.

mountain scenery, immense quantity of yanis (?), Ellisium [sic], four days" (Prescott 4). We know he had been reading Walter Scott at the time of his visit to the Azores; the medievalism of this author may have influenced Prescott's account of the Furnas Valley.

Prescott's grandfather, Thomas Hickling, owned a property in the Furnas Valley, which he had started to develop in the early 1770s. It included a house with thatched roof set on top of a hill, overlooking a circular artificial pool, surrounded by a large garden with smaller wooded areas. It was the first luxurious garden in São Miguel designed according to English models (Sousa 148). Hickling had named the house overlooking the large circular pool "Yankee Hall," which Prescott says had undergone changes since his mother's visit to the place some twenty five years before.¹⁰ He mentions in his account that the entrance leading up to the house was lined with a "long avenue of shady box-trees," culminating on a flight of fifty stone steps which took the visitor to the house proper (Ticknor 35). He was able to see for himself the famous pool described by his mother in her diary (the "Tanque"), with its small island in the middle and connecting stone bridge.¹¹ Since he left America, he had not had a happier time than the one he spent at Yankee Hall, he confesses. At Yankee Hall, Thomas Hickling welcomed many of foreign visitors who happened to be passing through the area in the latter part of the eighteenth century.¹²

¹⁰ Prescott's mother, Catherine Green Hickling, had visited her father, Thomas Hickling, between 1786 and 1798. Parts of her diary have been translated into Portuguese by Henrique de Aguiar Oliveira Rodrigues. It is another interesting source of information for these early cultural contacts between Portuguese-Azoreans and Americans. See, "Diário de Catherine Green Hickling 1786-1789." Henrique de Aguiar Oliveira Rodrigues, trad., *Insulana*, vol. 49, 1993, pp. 45-126.

¹¹ The Furnas property was sold in 1848 to the first Visconde da Praia, Duarte Borges da Câmara Medeiros (1799-1872). According to Thomas Hickling Jr., his father had spent in the gardens of that property close to five thousand dollars, and he had been forced to sell it for two thousand. The house seen there today is an extension of the old one and was built by the new owner in 1852. Cf. "Carta de Thomas Hickling Jr.," Tradução e notas de Henrique de Aguiar Oliveira Rodrigues, *Insulana*, vol. 51, nº2 (1995), p. 193.

¹² The characterization of the Azores as an Eden on Earth by visitors to the islands was by no means uncommon. We find it, for instance, in one of the first and most important traveller's accounts of the Azores, namely Captain Boid's *A Description of the Azores, or Western Islands* (1835). A later account, from the 1880s, confirms this. Walter Frederic Walker writes as follows about the Furnas Valley and Thomas Hickling's property there: "One of the most delightful spots at the Furnas is the Tank, now the property of the Count da Praia e Monforte [...]. As far back as 1770, Mr Hickling, a former United States Consul, had tastefully laid out the grounds – susceptible, from their natural situation, of being made into the perfect Eden they now are [...]. Cf. Walter Frederic Walker, *The Azores, or Western Islands* (London: Trübner & Co., 1886), pp. 242-3.

After reading Prescott's account of his visit to the Furnas Valley, we are left with the feeling that Prescott was as taken by it as his grandfather had been some decades before. Thomas Hickling is credited with having first realized the potential of the Valley as a place of relaxation and medical treatment, as there are innumerable types of mineral waters in the area (he also owned a Chalet de Banhos there, besides the Yankee Hall property). Hickling inscribed his name and the date 1770 on a stone near one of the hot springs in the area, which can still be seen today. It is possible to conclude, therefore, that Hickling played a significant role in kick-starting what became one of the most important activities in the area, tourism, given that until his time the majority of the local inhabitants simply avoided the place for a question of fear.

5. Conclusion

All in all, despite what Ticknor says about the pleasantness of Prescott's stay in São Miguel, the time he spent there could not have been entirely enjoyable. Prescott's eye inflammation persisted for most of the time, forcing him to have spent six weeks in a dark room, "on a spare vegetable diet, and applying blisters to keep down active inflammation" (Ticknor 32).

The arrival of spring improved his spirits, though, as we can infer from this passage from the letter he wrote to his sister on 12 March 1816: "The country is everywhere in the bloom of vegetation; – the myrtles, the roses, and laurels are in full bloom, and the dark green of the orange groves is finely contrasted with the "golden apples" which glitter through their foliage. Amidst such a scene I feel like a being of another world, new lighted on this distant home" (Ticknor 34). That positive feeling is also evident in the letter written to his grandparents a few days later, 15 March 1816, very close to his departure. There he fears no relapse of his eye condition and is looking forward to a land "where the windows are of Christian dimensions, and the medical advice such as may be relied upon" (Ticknor 38).

As tells his friend W. H. Gardiner in the last letter he wrote from São Miguel, the island had everything that could catch the poet's eye, but not the poet's soul. Prescott's life was lacking something, the kind of love and society which would have been natural in his native Boston. The sense of his words point to that: "*Sine Venere, friget Apollo*, and until some Azorian [*sic*] nymph shall warm my heart into love, the beauties of nature will hardly warm my imagination into poesy" (Ticknor 37). The truth is that the love prospects for a twenty-year-old American on the island of São Miguel in the early 1800s could not have been very promising, given that he had refused the "correspondence" offered to him by the denizens of the local nunneries. Maybe for that reason he had to turn to

literature. He tells us that H. (probably Harriet Frederica, 1793-1853) and A. (no doubt, Amelia Clementina, 1796-1872), his half-aunts, read to him. Scott, Shakespeare, travels through England and Scotland, parts of the Iliad and the Odyssey, and some Greek and Roman history, are all mentioned.

Prescott left for London on 8 April 1816. The trip lasted twenty four days, twenty of which he spent within the confines of the ship's state-room due to his eye condition. The first paragraph of chapter four starts off with an emotionally-charged farewell in Ponta Delgada. In it, Ticknor reconstructs for us the dialogue in which Prescott's grandfather, with tears running down his cheeks, is supposed to have said: "God knows, it never cost me more to part from one of my own children" (Ticknor 40).¹³ Prescott noted in his diary entry for 8 April 1816, the following: "*Dies numquam oblivis candor*, embarked for England, fine weather on the passage, head wind and calm, confined below 20 days" (Prescott 5). In London, he saw an eye specialist, Sir William Adams, who told him that his injured eye was practically paralysed and that very little could be done about his other eye. He took the opportunity to visit to the British Museum, the public libraries, and the booksellers. A visit outside London, to Richmond, to be more precise, is particularly interesting for it demonstrates the social connections the young man had: Prescott was accompanied by John Quincy Adams, Minister at the Court of St. James, who was later to be the fifth President of the United States. The rest of his diary is filled with the impressions he collected on his European Tour, which took him to Paris, Versailles, Turin, Genoa, Milan, Padua, Venice, Florence, and Rome. The second leg of the trip included Marseille, Avignon, Lyon, Paris, and London again. He left for the United States in the middle of the summer of 1817, thus completing, we may say, an important chapter of his formal and informal education.

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¹³ Ticknor reveals a slight inaccuracy in this passage when he writes that Prescott could not communicate with his grandmother well because they spoke different languages. The fact is that his grandfather had remarried in 1778. His second wife was an American woman from Philadelphia by the name of Sarah Faulder. By the time of Prescott's visit he had already a number of children by her.

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